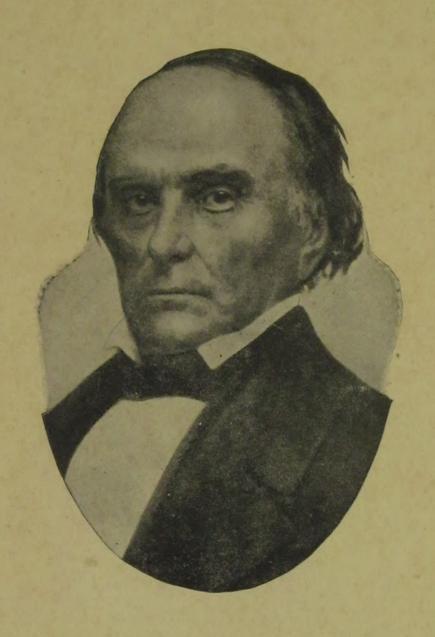
# LIVES OF WEBSTER AND CLAY



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\*292 East of the Sun and West of the Moon

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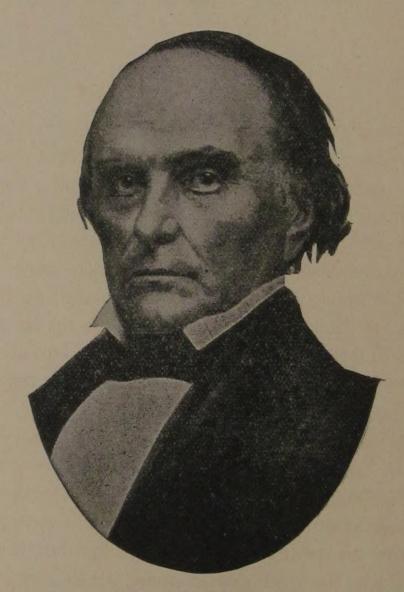
# INSTRUCTOR LITERATURE SERIES

# Lives of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay

BY Elizabeth Tristram



F. A. OWEN PUBLISHING COMPANY, DANSVILLE, N. Y.



Daniel Webster

# Daniel Webster

Between the year 1782 and the year 1796, there lived in a rudely built house in Salisbury, New Hampshire, a boy, named Daniel Webster. It was not a log cabin in which he lived, though his father, Ebenezer Webster, had built the first log cabin in that vicinity, but as his family increased, he had found it necessary to build another house, and in this second house, on the eighteenth of January, 1782, Daniel, his tenth son, was born. Little Dan was not a strong boy and did not like to do farm work, but he did love to read, and a very good reader he was.

His father ran a sawmill and would give Dan the task of tending the logs, and the boy knew, when he had started the saw and the water, the log would need no more attention for ten or fifteen minutes, and those minutes he spent in reading. He had but few books, but these he read and re-read till he knew them by heart, not much like the boys and girls now-a-days who never look at the same book twice.

The boy could read so well that when teamsters came to the mill they would tie their horses and say, "Come, let us go in and hear little Dan read a psalm."

His father had never been to school, but had learned

to read and to write, and the little taste of knowledge that he had obtained made him very anxious to give this son, who showed such a love for study, the advantages which he had missed.

His brother Ezekiel was two years older than Dan, and the two were great friends. Zeke was strong and healthy and like the rest of the family waited on Dan, and did very much as the younger brother said. One day their father went away, leaving them some work to do. When he returned and found it not done, he said to Zeke, "What have you been doing all day?" "Nothing," answered Zeke. "And you?" said the father to Daniel. "Helping Zeke," was the reply.

One day the two boys went to a fair and each had some money to spend. When they returned, the father asked Daniel what he had done with his money. "Spent it, sir," said Dan. "And you, Zeke?" "Lent it to Dan," was the reply.

So it was when Mr. Webster began to think about sending his youngest son to a boy's boarding school, that Ezekiel offered to stay and work on the farm to help raise the necessary one hundred and fifty dollars. That does not seem such a large sum today, but then it was a small fortune, for Ebenezer Webster had raised his large family on much less than four hundred dollars a year. But all the family were willing to sacrifice and to save that Daniel might go to school, and when his father told him, in the field one day, that this was the plan, the boy could not speak but grasped his father's hand and wept for joy.

He had learned all that he could in their little district school, which was open but a few weeks in the year, but he had learned a great deal outside of school.

Daniel Webster had some interesting story tellers for his teachers. He never liked to study arithmetic, but he had learned geography and history without the use of a textbook.

Sitting around the fireplace in his own home, and those of his neighbors, he had heard his father tell stories of the French and Indian war, and of the Revolution, for Ebenezer Webster had been a brave soldier in both conflicts;—he had listened to John Bowen, who had been a prisoner among the Indians, to Robert Wise, who had sailed around the world, to George Baylor, a pioneer who had seen the first tree felled in Northern New Hampshire, and to the women of the neighborhood, his own mother among them, who had heard the midnight yells of the savages. "Oh, I shall never hear such story telling again," he would often say in later years.

His father and he set out for the school at Exeter, picking their way through the forest. His teacher was a Mr. Clifford and there were about ninety boys in the school, most of them well-dressed city chaps. Daniel was a rough, untrained country boy, dressed in the homespun clothes his mother had made for him. He was awkward and bashful, and the other boys made sport of him, so that, no matter how well he knew his lesson, he could never make a good recitation. Time after time he learned a piece to speak, and when alone,

could recite it better than any other boy, but when he stood up before the school, he would stammer and have to sit down.

He was not as careful as he should have been of his personal appearance. Perhaps that added to his embarrassment.

The story is told that the teacher was tired of seeing him with dirty hands every day, and one day called him to the platform and was going to whip him on the hand, as was the custom in those school-days. When he looked at Dan's hand, he said, 'Daniel Webster, if you can show me a dirtier hand than that in this schoolroom, I shall not whip you.' Quick as a flash Dan held out his other hand saying, 'Here is one, sir.' The master was so pleased with the quick wit of the boy that he excused him from the punishment.

At Christmas time, Daniel told Mr. Clifford that he was going home and thought he should not return. The master knew what the trouble was, and told him that he was one of the brightest boys in the school, and that some day he would make his mark in the world, if he would learn to keep himself clean and neat, and then forget all about himself and think only of what he had to say. Those words of encouragement, the first that the boy had ever received in regard to his studies, were a turning point in the life of one of the greatest men America has produced, though that teacher, like many another, little dreamed it. That schoolhouse is still standing, the pride of the town of Exeter, and in one room upstairs the visitor may

sit down at the table where this awkward ill-dressed country lad sat, and look out of the window from which he looked after his lessons were learned, and feel that it is an honor to do so, but of the boys who made sport of the country lad we neither know nor hear a word.

The next year his father sent him to a private teacher to prepare him for Dartmouth, for he and Ezekiel had decided that Daniel must go to college. He did go to college, though he put up with many hardships, often wearing shoes, as he said, that not only let in water but pebbles and stones, as well. But he learned to recite and to speak and very soon was one of the popular men of the college.

When he was eighteen years old, he was chosen to deliver the Fourth of July oration. It was at the time when England was capturing the United States vessels and compelling the sailors to work on British ships, claiming that they were English subjects. Indignation ran high in New England and the young man Webster had plenty of fire for his speech.

When he was older and had gained great fame as an orator, he was ashamed of his first speech, for he had used so many big words, as we say; and as he grew older and wiser he learned that to make a powerful speech he must express his ideas in the simplest manner possible—that it is the thought, more than the words, that counts. But this schoolboy oration, though entirely too bombastic, pleased his hearers, who predicted a great future for him, and he finished college with honors.

And now, Daniel's thoughts turned homeward. There were his father and brother, plodding away on the farm to furnish him money to go to college. Zeke would have liked to go to college, too, but that was not to be considered. But Daniel did consider it. When he reached home, he went to Zeke and told him that he was going to ask their father to borrow money for the family to live on, mortgaging the farm to do so, while Zeke was at school.

It certainly was a great deal for Daniel to ask of his aged parents. Perhaps, had he been of a mathematical rather than of a literary turn of mind, he would not have asked it. As usual, he won the day. Zeke went to college and Daniel went to work, and he had never worked to a better purpose, for in after years when Ezekiel was also a lawyer, his famous brother was glad to go to him for counsel.

Daniel went to Fryeburg, Maine, to teach school. In the evenings he copied deeds, a work he very much disliked, but by it he earned his board, and so had more money to send to Ezekiel. One can imagine this young teacher standing before his school, and perhaps showing them the jack-knife which had been given him for learning the most Bible verses, and the hand-kerchief he had bought when he was eight years old, which had the Constitution printed on it, and of how he had learned it by heart. He did not tell them, for he did not then know, that years later, he would tell the whole nation the meaning of that Constitution.

From teaching, the young man took up the study of

law, and went to Portsmouth, a then thriving seaport, to practise. Up to this time Daniel Webster was not a well built man. To be sure, anyone who had once looked into those wonderful, deep set eyes, and responded to that 'large Webster smile,' would look again, but he had not yet developed that gigantic frame, which, as some one has said, made the buildings look small as he walked along the streets.

The first Sunday after he went to Portsmouth, he went to church and sat with the minister's family. The eldest daughter did not know his name, but went home and told that a very remarkable person had sat in their pew. The minister replied that it must have been the young lawyer who had just opened an office in the town, and had put out a sign which read, D. Webster, Attorney.

A few days later the young attorney went to live at the home of the minister, and they enjoyed his company very much. He made himself very agreeable and the family enjoyed the evenings he spent with them, entertaining them with stories and witty sayings. He owed a great deal to that minister, for every morning, very early, the clergyman would take his place at one end of a cross-cut saw, with the young lawyer at the other, and together they would get the exercise which both of them so much needed.

From this time, during his nine months residence in Portsmouth, where he brought his bride, and where all his children were born, he improved in health, his form expanded, his mind grew and his fame spread, not only over the United States but England as well.

In 1820 he delivered the Plymouth oration, commemorating the landing of the Pilgrims, and in 1825 his great voice carried to fifty thousand hearers the words of his famous Bunker Hill oration, which every boy and girl in the land should read.

A year later, on July 4th, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, both ex-presidents, passed away, and Daniel Webster delivered an address which was the greatest funeral oration ever heard in America.

He was twice elected by the people of New Hamp-shire to represent them in Congress, and when he moved from Portsmouth to Boston, the people of Massachusetts sent him to the senate.

It must be remembered that this man was born at the close of the Revolutionary War, just before the treaty of peace was made between the thirteen colonies and England. The colonies were scattered along the Atlantic coast and eastern slope of the Alleghenies. They had no money to pay their heavy war debt, and though they were called the United States, they were by no means united. In fact, they were less united than at the beginning of the war. The Revolution had proven that the colonists could defend themselves,—the time had come when they must learn to govern themselves. The confederation was a compact between the states but did not bind them together as a nation.

The people were not satisfied and a body of men was chosen to draw up a constitution, the preamble of which

reads, "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." This is only the preamble, or introduction, and then follows the foundation upon which is based all the laws of the nation.

Discussions followed as to whether the Constitution should be adopted. Ebenezer Webster was one of the men who, long before, had seen the need of a more perfect union, and Daniel had grown up firmly impressed with the idea that he was a citizen of a nation as well as of a state. And it was his eloquence that awakened men to the importance of the future of America and inspired them to preserve the Union.

The people of the South owned slaves. Theirs was an agricultural country. The people of the North were bitterly opposed to slavery. Theirs was a manufacturing country and laws made for the the North did not suit the South. As the country grew, and new states asked admission to the Union, trouble arose as to whether they should be admitted as slave or as free states. South Carolina stood out so firmly for States' Rights that she took steps to declare some of the national laws null and void.

The time had come when the truth must be impressed upon the people that the United States was not a Confederacy, loosely knit together and continuing so only as long as each state said so, but that it was a nation and that its laws were the supreme law of the land. It must be shown that while the Constitution declares that new states may come into the Union, it does not declare that old states may go out.

A speech must be made which should be heard all over the land, at every fireside, on every farm, at every work bench and in every schoolroom. A speaker must be chosen who was a great lawyer, a great orator, a great statesman. The task fell to the lot of Daniel Webster.

His opponent, Robert Y. Hayne, spoke eloquently in presenting the side for States' Rights. But when Daniel Webster, without notes, arose in the Senate, and struck right out from the shoulder for seven long hours, growing stronger and more powerful the longer he spoke, he had proven that if one state could rebel against a national law, the Union was no longer a Union. He explained and expounded the Constitution as it had never been explained and expounded before. Never had such a speech been made. Pamphlets were printed and sown broadcast over the land. Schoolboys repeated in every schoolroom the words of the great statesman,—

"I hope I may never see the flag of my country with its stars separated, torn by commotion and smoking with the blood of civil war. I hope I may never see the standard raised of separate States' Rights, star against star, stripe against stripe. I hope I shall not see written as its motto, first liberty and then Union.

But I hope to see spread all over our flag, blazoned in letters of light, and proudly floating over land and sea, that other sentiment, dear to my heart, 'Union and Liberty, now and forever, one and inseparable.'"

This reply to Hayne has been called his greatest speech. The occasion was the most important in the history of our Congress. His son, Fletcher, wrote a letter to his father saying—'I never knew what the Constitution really was, till your last short speech. I thought it was a compact between states. I like that last reply better than all the rest. It comes out so apropos and conclusive that Mr. Hayne has nothing to say. It winds him up, as we boys say.''

And now, as you have read in your histories, troubles came thick and fast upon the country.

When we read history we are apt not to notice dates and to think that events follow each other very closely, though this is seldom true. It takes a good many years of troublous times to lead up to a crisis and Daniel Webster, his mission fulfilled, had been dead a long time before the outbreak of the Civil War. Yet away back in 1849, at his home in Marshfield one day, it was noticed that he was very sad and depressed.

After dinner he stood for a long time looking into the fire and then said in his deep tones, "If this slavery agitation goes on, we shall have war between the North and the South and who is ready for that?"

In 1831 the States' Rights party in South Carolina held a celebration on the Fourth of July, and in October Webster wrote to Henry Clay in regard to the

approaching session of Congress—'"The Constitution is to be assailed. Everything is to be debated as if nothing had ever been settled. Everything valuable in the government is to be fought for, and we need your arm in the fight."

But Clay was already busy getting up a compromise bill, known as the Missouri Compromise, which provided that slavery should exist as far north as the Mason and Dixon line and no farther. Webster favored the bill and it was passed by the Senate. But the trouble was not settled, it was only averted. The Missouri Compromise did not prevent, but it did postpone, the Civil War, which, had it broken out at that time, would have resulted in victory for the South.

Daniel Webster had always been opposed to slavery, but now when he saw that the Union was in danger on account of slavery, he bent every effort to make peace between the North and the South. According to previous Slave laws, a negro who had escaped from his master should be returned, and any one who harbored him or hindered his arrest, should be fined five hundred dollars. Now Daniel Webster believed that it was only just that the slave should be returned to his master, but he also believed in and fought for a jury trial for the negro, for there were a great many free negroes in the North and kidnapping was very common.

But there were men in the North called Abolitionists, who insisted that slavery was so wrong that it was a person's duty to hide the slaves from their masters, and because Daniel Webster did not think this just, they criticized him very severely, unmindful of the fact that the great Abraham Lincoln also thought that if the slaves were to be freed, their owners should receive a fair price in payment.

So when Daniel Webster aspired to the presidency, he was twice defeated, and accused of working in the interest of slavery to get the support of the South.

His second defeat nearly broke his heart, but we cannot but agree with one of his friends who said, "Why does this man wish to be president? He is much more than a president."

He died at Marshfield in October, 1852, and he was buried, as he requested, without show or parade. The casket was placed on the spacious lawn, and six men, not famous in history, but plain farmer friends, carried it to its last resting place.

No American has done more to make America what it is than Daniel Webster.

His words made Lincoln wiser, Grant more brave, and inspired deeds of heroism on a hundred battle fields.

He looked great, he thought great thoughts, he was great.



Henry Clay

# Henry Clay

In the study of history, it is important that we study the lives of the men who have made history, and it is not only those who have performed great deeds, but those whose wisdom and advice lay back of the deeds, who claim our interest and attention.

Henry Clay was born April 12, 1777, and was therefore five years older than Daniel Webster. It is fitting, therefore, that we study the lives of these two statesmen together as they were engaged essentially in the same work. Henry Clay was born in Hanover county, Virginia, in a neighborhood called "The Slashes," from its low marshy ground. His father was Rev. John Clay, a Baptist minister. He died when Henry, next to the youngest of eight children, was four years old.

Think for a moment now, of the condition of the country at that time—1781. Mrs. Clay was a very patriotic woman. It is told that while her husband lay dead in the house Colonel Tarlton, under command of Lord Cornwallis, passed through the country on a raid, and having sympathy for the widow, left a handful of gold and silver on Mrs. Clay's table, in payment of something which his soldiers had confiscated. Mrs. Clay, to show her dislike of anything British, swept the money into the fire, and though we may admire her patriotism we must surely criticize her prudence.

The children were sent to a log schoolhouse. The teacher, whose name was Peter Deacon, was an Englishman who taught to the best of his ability when sober, and chastised to the best of his ability when drunk.

When he was old enough, Henry worked after school hours to help support the family. Sometimes he could be seen with his bare feet following the plough, sometimes riding the horse, with only a bridle and a bag of meal thrown across the horse's back, from his home to Mrs. Daricott's mill on the Pamunky River. It was thus he earned the nick-name, "Mill Boy of the Slashes."

His mother's second husband was Captain Henry Watkins, who proved a good father to the children, though seven more were added to their number. When Henry was fourteen, he was put in a store. He worked there for a year, and devoted all his spare time to reading—not story books, but books which required thought. Captain Watkins was not slow to see that the boy deserved a chance to develop his mental faculties, and obtained for him a position in the office of the clerk of the High Court of Chancery.

The morning he appeared at the office the other clerks were inclined to make sport of him. He was a tall, awkward, raw-boned lad, with more hands and feet than he knew what to do with, and he was dressed in a home-made suit of gray 'figinny,''—a mixture of cotton and silk. His linen had been 'painfully' starched by his anxious mother. It was not long, however, till the other office men found that a very competent young man sat at one of the desks.

Very soon he attracted the attention of George Wythe, the chancellor of the High Court of Chancery. Mr. Wythe was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and long before there had been much agitation on the subject he had set his slaves free, because he could not believe human bondage to be right, and more than that, he supported them after they were free.

Thomas Jefferson, and several other men who became famous, worked in his office when they were young. So young Clay was very fortunate in being selected by such a man, for his private secretary, for Mr. Wythe not only helped him in his studies, but talked with him, and conversation with such a man was almost an education in itself. No wonder, that with such a source of inspiration close at hand, young Clay decided to become a lawyer. He realized what such a venture meant, for he was poor and he knew what a struggle it would be. At twenty he was admitted to the bar, and was introduced into the best society of Richmond. He was witty, but always courteous, and always cheerful, and was therefore, always wanted. He joined a debating society, but was wise enough to keep quiet until he had something worth saying. One night, when a question was being discussed, he arose to make his first speech. "Gentlemen of the Jury," he began, and he heard a suppressed titter. He realized his blunder, and his knees nearly lost their usefulness. But drawing himself together the young lawyer began again, and now his audience began to sit up and take notice.

Such a flow of eloquence fell from his lips that his

hearers fairly held their breath. As he went on, they realized that their new member was something above the ordinary as a speaker, and the mill boy of the slashes found himself with society at his feet. But he found, too, that society does not bring in, but rather demands, a great deal of money, and he decided to follow his parents to Kentucky, and grow up with the country.

At this time, the Ohio Valley was the Far West. Only nine years before, pioneers, loaded on flat boats had floated down the Ohio River and founded the first settlement at Marietta, Ohio. They came from New England, New York and Pennsylvania. In twelve years the number had increased to 45,000. Kentucky was settled some years earlier, but by a different class of people. Daniel Boone, and other adventurous spirits, had entered the land, as farmers and huntsmen, but they had not been as interested in building towns as in the enjoyment of the wild life which the country afforded; so that ten years later, there were less than two hundred white men in Kentucky.

Then the tide of emigration seemed to turn that way, so that when the first United States census was taken in 1790 the population of the state numbered 73,600, of whom 61,000 were white. People of culture came from Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland, many of them taking their slaves, so that at the time that Henry Clay took up his residence in Lexington the population of the state was over 180,000, of whom one-fifth were negroes.

When the young lawyer, with his license, but little

else in his pocket, climbed from the stage coach in the city of Lexington, he found a much different but not an uncongenial people. He was a good "mixer" and soon became popular, both with the cultured social set and the rude frontiersmen.

Fifty years later, when he retired from public life. he said in the same city: "In looking back upon my origin and progress through life, I have great reason to be thankful. My father died in 1781, leaving me an infant of too tender years to retain any recollection of his smiles or endearments. My surviving parent moved to this state in 1792, leaving me, a boy fifteen years of age, in the office of the High Court of Chancery, in the city of Richmond, without guardian, without pecuniary means of support, to steer my course as I might or could. A neglected education was improved by my own irregular exertions, without the benefit of systematic instruction. I studied law principally in the office of a lamented friend, the late Governor Brooke, then attorney general of Virginia. I obtained a license to practise the profession and established myself in Lexington in 1797 without patrons, without the favor of the great or opulent, without the means of paying my weekly board, and in the midst of a bar uncommonly distinguished by eminent members. I remember how comfortable I thought I should be if I could make one hundred pounds Virginia money, per year, and with what delight I received the first fifteen shilling fee. My hopes were more than realized. I immediately rushed into a successful and lucrative practice."

A great many of his first cases were murder cases, and invariably the murderer escaped the death sentence. The young lawyer's eloquence always made an impression on the simple-minded jury and he seldom lost a case. Of course, these results made Clay famous as a lawyer, but at the same time it gave Kentucky a bad reputation. He had begun to realize this when he met a murderer whom he had saved from the gallows, one day, and said: "Ah, Willis, I fear I have saved too many like you!"

Later, when he was public prosecutor, there came before him the case of a devoted and respected slave, who had been so ill treated by an overseer during the absence of the master, that in self-defense he murdered the man who was so cruelly abusing him. Clay argued that had he been a free man, he would be acquitted on the ground of self-defense, but being a slave who was in duty bound to submit to chastisement, it was murder and must be punished as such. The slave was therefore hanged, but he met death so heroically that the prosecuting attorney was more than ever filled with remorse and not long after resigned his office, and ever after was the friend and defender of the black man.

In 1799, when Kentucky revised her constitution and sought to introduce a measure which would gradually abolish slavery, Clay was its staunch supporter. Naturally, he made enemies, for the wealthy planters who wanted their slaves were more or less afraid of the influence of this young statesman, but Henry Clay was firm in the principle that he later expressed—'I would

rather be right than be President." He was always proud to say that he was working against slavery even when he was defeated.

He was not as well educated as he thousands of times wished he were, for his early schooling had not been systematic and conditions in Kentucky did not tend to studious habits, but he could make good use of what he did know. 'For many years, as a young man, he made it a rule to read, if possible, every day, in some historical or scientific book, and then to repeat what he had read, in free, off-hand speech, sometimes in a cornfield, at others in the forest, and not unfrequently in a distant barn with the horse and ox for auditors.' He had a voice of rare power and musical beauty.

He married Lucretia Hart in 1799 and to them were born eleven children. He purchased Ashland, a beautiful estate of six hundred acres, near Lexington, and it eventually became one of the show places of the South.

At twenty-six Clay was elected to the State legislature and less than four years later, was appointed to fill an unexpired term in the United States Senate. According to the Constitution he was not eligible to this high office, as he lacked three months of being thirty years old; but the records do not show that the question was raised in regard to his age. "He was sworn in as a matter of course, but without the bashful hesitation generally expected of young Senators, he plunged at once into the current of proceedings as though he had been there all his life. On the fourth

day after he had taken his seat we find him offering a resolution concerning the circuit court of the United States;—a few days later, another concerning an appropriation of land for the improvement of the Ohio rapids; then another touching Indian depredations; and another proposing an amendment to the federal constitution, concerning the judicial power of the United States. He wrote home telling of the compliments that he had received, but added that Kentucky was the state that he loved, and to which he wished to return. As soon as he was home again, he was elected to the State legislature, where he was made Speaker.

When trouble arose between France and England and sorely crippled our commerce, Henry Clay, from the standpoint of a Kentucky farmer, advocated that the government should so arrange matters that the American people should not, in case of war, be dependent upon any foreign nation for the things necessary to their living. "A judicious American farmer," said he, "in his household way, manufactures whatever is needed for his family." He advised that all clothing worn by the American people be made in this country, and that the legislators wear no imported goods. "The nation," he said, "that imports its clothing from abroad, is but little less dependent than if it imported its bread."

His motive, however, was misunderstood, and Humphrey Marshall, a strong Federalist, rose to put down the young upstart. A wordy battle followed and according to the custom of the day, had to be settled by a duel.

Both men were slightly wounded, but friends interfered in time to save further bloodshed.

In the winter of 1809-10, he was again sent to fill a vacancy in the United States Senate, where he continued to be the champion of the protection of home manufactures. When the question of chartering the United States Bank came up, Clay opposed the measure as corrupt and unconstitutional; and his remarks on the subject were treasured up to be used with great effect against him when in 1816 a revival of the matter made manifest an alteration in his views.

As soon as his term in the Senate had expired in 1811 he was elected to the House of Representatives for the Lexington district. He was glad of the change, for, as he said, he "preferred the turbulence of the House to the solemn stillness of the Senate." The House was not then ruled by committees, as it is at present, but was the place where questions were freely discussed. It was a debating body, where young Americans had a chance to express themselves, and Henry Clay was one who had something to say. He was at once elected Speaker, but with the understanding that the office did not bar him from taking part in debate. And at that time there was plenty to talk about, for the British had seized more than nine hundred American ships, and France more than five hundred and fifty.

When several thousand Americans had been impressed as British seamen, Clay demanded war. Somebody must be whipped, and because Great Britain had been even more insolent than France, and probably too,

because the days of the Revolution were not yet forgotten, the general feeling was that she should be chastised first. President Madison was glad to have some one tell him what to do, and Clay was glad to tell him. Every speech he made breathed war.

To the question, "what are we to gain by war?" he replied, "what are we not to lose by peace? Commerce, character, a nation's best treasure, honor!"

"It is in vain," he said, "for Great Britian to set up the plea of necessity, and to allege that she cannot exist without the impressment of her seamen. naked truth is, she comes with her press gangs on board of our vessels, seizes our native as well as naturalized seamen and drags them into her service. It is wrong that we should be held to prove the nationality of our seamen. It is the business of Great Britain to identify her subjects. The colors that float from the musthead should be the credentials of our seamen. have no fears of French or English subjugation. If we are united, we are too powerful for the mightiest nation in Europe, or all Europe combined. If we are separated or torn asunder, we shall become an easy prey to the weakest of them. \* \* \* If there is any description of rights which more than any other, should unite all parties in all quarters of the Union, it is unquestionably the rights of the person. No matter what his vocation, whether he seeks subsistence amid the dangers of the sea, or draws them from the bowels of the earth or from the humblest occupations of mechanic life, all hearts ought to unite and every arm be braced to vindicate his cause. \* \* \* My plan would be to call out the ample resources of the country, give them a judicious direction, prosecute the war with the utmost vigor, strike whenever we can reach the enemy, at sea or on land, and negotiate the terms of a peace at Quebec or at Halifax. We are told that England is a proud and lofty nation, which, disdaining to wait for danger, meets it half way. Haughty as she is, we once triumphed over her, and if we do not listen to the counsels of timidity and despair we shall again prevail. In such a case, with the aid of Providence, we must come out crowned with success, but if we fail, let us fail like men, lash ourselves to our gallant tars, and expire together in one common struggle, fighting for free trade and seamen's rights.''

His two days' speech not only made an impression on the House, but electrified the whole country.

Your histories tell that war was declared, in spite of those who opposed the measure; of the struggles and the outcome; and much of the credit is due Henry Clay, for not only the men behind the guns, but the men in the council chamber, fight the country's battles. When President Madison spoke of making him Commander-in-Chief of the army, the question was asked, "what shall we do without Clay in Congress?"

When the war was nearly over, Clay was selected as one of a committee of five to confer with the British government to effect a treaty of peace. They sailed for Ghent in the Netherlands, July 6, 1814, where they argued for five months, but finally settled an honorable

peace. While there, Clay heard of the Battle of New Orleans and said, "Now I can go to England without mortification." The committee spent three months in London, negotiating a treaty of commerce.

When he returned to America, Clay found himself famous. He was welcomed everywhere—a man of fine presence if not handsome face, possessing a voice never equalled, perhaps, for its musical tone—a man who made friends everywhere and never lost them, for he had the faculty of remembering faces and names, and he had a handgrasp which was never forgotten.

He was so anxious for the rapid development of America, that he became a protectionist, or the leader of the so-called American System, as opposed to Free Trade, or the Foreign System. He believed that to become a powerful nation, we must encourage our own manufactures and pay high wages, shutting out the products of the cheap labor of Europe.

He was returned to Congress and, declining appointment as Minister to Russia, was again chosen Speaker. This office he held altogether for fourteen years.

"Henry Clay stands in the traditions of the House of Representatives," says a biographer, "as the greatest of its Speakers. His perfect mastery of parliamentary law, his quickness of decision in applying it, and his unfailing presence of mind and power of command in moments of excitement and confusion, the courteous dignity of his bearing, are remembered as unequalled by any one of those who had preceded or who have followed him."

On his return to Congress he was in time to help

fight the most vital question the United States had had to consider. While Clay may be said to have hastened the war of 1812, he just as surely delayed the Civil War, and earned the title of the "Great Pacificator."

We are so apt to think, when we read history and find so many great events crowded into a few pages, that they are all of sudden growth, while in truth, it is not too much to say that for more than fifty years before the outbreak, the Civil War had been brewing.

In 1818, Missouri asked to be admitted to the Union. At that time, there were eleven free and eleven slave states and there was comparatively good feeling as long as the division was even. During the discussion concerning Missouri, Massachusetts gave her consent that Maine should become a state. Up to this time, Maine had been part of Massachusetts. Now that the separation was effected, Maine asked leave to enter the Union as a free state. So the South said, "Then Missouri must enter as a slave state." The discussion grew very bitter until threats of civil war were heard, and Jefferson, from his home in Monticello, wrote to a friend, "The Missouri question is the most portentous one that ever threatened the Union. In the gloomiest moments of the Revolutionary War, I never had any apprehension equal to that I feel from this source."

Mr. Thomas, a senator from Illinois, proposed that Missouri be admitted as a slave state, but that in all the country purchased from France in 1803, north of the parallel of 36° 30′, except Missouri, there should be no slavery.

Then Henry Clay, the peacemaker, went to work in earnest to bring about this compromise. He not only spoke in meetings, but went from member to member, persuading and urging, and when the bill was passed, people said that he had saved the Union, and he was honored and feted and feasted everywhere. It is true that peace was restored for a few years, but the South had found the weak spot against which to make future attacks—they could always expect a compromise, when they threatened to secede from the Union. The Union was not then held sacred, as it is today, but was still considered by many in the light of an experiment.

Whether anything was gained by thus postponing a settlement; whether it showed wiser statesmanship to avert rather than to face danger; or whether it would have been better to have brought the matter to an issue, without compromise, are interesting questions which school boys and girls may find profitable to debate.

Henry Clay was now recognized as one of the three greatest statesmen of the age, the other two being Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun. He was talked of for president to succeed James Monroe, and in spite of the motto which is always associated with his name—"I would rather be right than be President," he did wish very much to be president. He would not, however, do anything dishonorable, or make any pledges or promises, in order to obtain the position.

He was defeated by John Quincy Adams, who made him Secretary of State. Of all the candidates at this election, no one had a majority, so the election went to the House of Representatives. Mr. Clay, as the fourth highest candidate, could not be voted for, so he threw his votes to Adams. Then bitter enemies arose who said that this arrangement had been planned, and John Randolph, of Virginia, made a speech so venomous that Clay became enraged and challenged him to a duel. The two men met on the bank of the Potomac, Randolph intending no violence, but Clay in dead earnest. Randolph had told a friend the night before that nothing in the world could induce him to harm a hair of Clay's head. Clay fired at his opponent, making a hole in his coat, but Randolph emptied his pistol into the air, saying, "I do not fire at you, Mr. Clay." When Clay saw this he rushed forward, exclaiming, "I trust God, my dear sir, that you are unhurt. After what has occurred, I would not harm you for a thousand worlds."

The two men shook hands. Nothing was proven by the shooting, yet by the custom of the day the wrong was considered avenged. Years later, when Randolph, very ill, was on his way to Philadelphia, he stopped in Washington and was carried to the Senate Chamber. Clay was speaking. "Hold me up," said the sick man. "Hold me up, I have come to hear that voice."

In the next presidential election, 1828, Clay was defeated by Andrew Jackson. He retired to his Ashland farm to enjoy a season of rest, but was elected to the Senate in 1831 to again make peace between the North and the South when South Carolina wished to secede on the tariff question.

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In 1842 he resigned from the Senate, and in 1844 again ran for president, being nominated unanimously by the Whig party, but was defeated by James K. Polk.

Perhaps no man has had more warm personal friends than had Henry Clay. When he was defeated, letters of sympathy and tokens of affection came from all classes of people.

In 1848 he was again called from private life and chosen to the Senate. It was during this term, in 1850, that he again stood between the warring passions of the North and the South, and brought forth another compromise whereby California was admitted as a free State. Texas received her present boundaries, and two territories, Utah and New Mexico, with no mention of slavery, were made out of part of the country bought from Mexico. The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia was provided for. Though in poor health and physically weak, he made a two days' speech, in support of this measure, which was one of the notable speeches of his career.

Though his strength continued to fail, he kept on with his duties as a Senator. He died in Washington June 29, 1852, aged seventy-six years, and was laid to rest, as he had wished, under the green sod of Kentucky.

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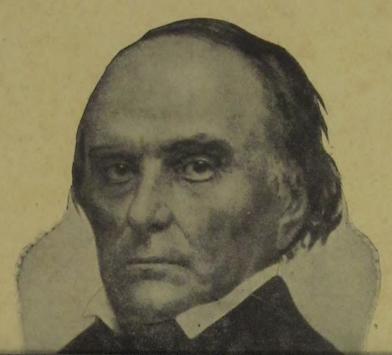
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